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Campus Commentary

VOLUME 1

SEPTEMBER 1950

No. 1

Dear Brother:

Last summer more than a hundred of the brethren gathered on our campus for a day in order to discuss the present program and the future plans of the University. In the course of the discussion some of us who work here presented a number of facts and ideas which were somewhat surprising to the men assembled at the meeting. They unanimously felt that a more regular report concerning some of the activities and plans of the University should be presented to our brethren in the ministry. They also decided that this report should often contain things which are merely referred to in our University Bulletin and elsewhere, and that it should be a very personal and direct report to the brethren concerning the problems and opportunities which we have at the University and their relation to the work in our parishes. We now have students from almost one thousand congregations and their training is very important to all of us. In addition, it was felt that now and then some ideas appear here on the campus or elsewhere which should be conveyed to the brethren for whatever they may be worth.

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. I felt that this suggestion was a good one, and I shall attempt to follow it at more or less regular intervals. I really hope that this letter will not add too much to your burdens of reading, and that it will not be assigned to the circular file beside your desk too quickly. I really feel that the brethren had something, and that only in this way can we keep you adequately informed about the University which we are asking you and your people to support

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. As you can readily imagine, the enrollment problem has been worrying us a good deal during the past six months. The imminent shadow of war has again disturbed very many of our young people, and we find that they are increasingly uncertain about planning far ahead. Our enrollment this year will, therefore, be somewhat smaller than it was last year largely due to the fact that so many of our young men are beginning to join up. By the way, I am certain that you also have this problem, and it may be well for all of us to pay particular attention to the young men and women who are once more face to face with long years of waiting and separation. One of the great tragedies about war is that it hits the younger generation the hardest and most bitterly

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. The decrease in our enrollment, of course, has a definite bearing on our financial situation. We have now set up the University for 2000 students and hope to level off at that particular standard until further progress can be made. The uncertainty created by the world's situation now makes it necessary for us to re-examine this entire program to be sure that we shall be able to carry it. The problem of our current support during the fiscal year is, therefore, immediate and acute. I really hope that you will generously remember this when the time for the annual collection rolls around

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. Another matter. As you know, Synod and its institutions have been placing increased emphasis on adult education. Here at Valpo we are trying to make our own contribution to this program through the institutes that are conducted during the entire summer. During this summer recess we have had a number of institutes and workshops which have been remarkably successful. Perhaps later on we can give you a more detailed report also in the hope that more of the brethren will be able to come to the campus, perhaps with their families, in order to attend one or the other of the institutes next

summer. Curiously enough, the one that seems to be least successful so far is the one in politics. Apparently, we have not yet reared enough men and women who are taking part in public life. That one will have to be built up very gradually

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. Referring back to the enrollment problem, perhaps I should report that we lost quite a few students this year because we do not offer elementary education. This field seems to be one in which a great many of our girls particularly are interested. You will readily understand that we would like to introduce it, but it will also add to our financial burdens. It should, of course, be clearly understood that the University should not and will not train teachers for parochial schools. I feel very deeply that this should remain the task of our Synodical institutions who are engaged in that work. On the other hand, the training of public school teachers on the elementary level would be a legitimate field for us, and the demand for it seems to be increasing. I hope that before very long we shall be able to enter that particular area of work

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. In one of my future letters I should like to say something about our impressions of the training of our boys and girls particularly, also, in our confirmation classes. Apparently some remarkable work is being done in many parishes in giving the younger generation a sound foundation in Lutheran doctrine and life. On the other hand, some weaknesses seem to be evident, and I should like to discuss them with you at some future time

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. Every time some of the brethren come to campus there are inquiries about our prospects in athletics. Perhaps I should report that at the present time our outlook for the coming year seems to be unusually good. We shall have a football team which will undoubtedly rank high in the new conference which six schools here in Indiana have organized. Our basketball team will undoubtedly be about 25% better than it was last year. At least, so the coaches tell me, and you know how notoriously pessimistic all coaches are

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. In some of my future letters to you I would like to discuss the academic standards of the University — the moral and spiritual problems of our young people as we see them here — some of the books which are used either for required reading or outside consultation — the need for trained housemothers and housemasters and many other related problems

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. Meanwhile, permit me at this time to extend to you my warmest good wishes for a happy and blessed season of church work during 1950-51. With the world as it is, it will probably not be an easy year for many of you, but I wish you a full measure of benediction and wisdom from on high.

Very cordially and sincerely yours,

O. P. Kretzmann
President